LABOUR MONTHLY

EDITOR R. PALME DUTT

NOTES OF THE MONTH
R. P. D.

HITLER'S SECRET WEAPON
Ivor Montagu

THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE BATTLE
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COMMON WEALTH OR COMMON DANGER
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THE ROAD TO LABOUR UNITY
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BOOK REVIEWS

HITLER'S SECRET WEAPON

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

The Premier's Broadcast—Silence on the War—A Grim Contrast—Facing the Facts—Lesson of Kharkov—Absence of Second Front—Three Lost Months—Crisis of the War—Soviet Winter Offensive—Hitler's Confession—"Non-Intervention" to the Rescue—Casablanca's Fruits—Divisions West to East—Fascism's Technique—Appeals to Washington and London—A Sober Warning—Unity and Action—Political Tendencies—Labour Party Conference—Will to Victory

THE Premier's broadcast of March 21 has confirmed the seriousness of the war situation—not by what it said, but by what it omitted. No attempt was made to assess the military situation, to draw the lessons of the past six months, to face the critical turn newly developing or indicate the urgent tasks now before us. It is true that this speech must be read in the light of the difficult home political situation, as well as of current diplomatic problems, which it attempted to meet. The aim was, in the speaker's words, to "simplify and mollify political divergencies and enable all our political forces to march forward to the main objective in unity and, so far as possible, in step." The most explicit warnings were given, both at the beginning and the end, against "sanguine hopes" of victory round the corner; against the resumption of peace-time political divisions in the midst of the war crisis; against the "unseemliness and even the danger of it appearing to the world that we here in Britain are diverting our attention to peace, which is still remote, and to the fruits of victory which have still to be won, while our Russian Allies are fighting for dear life"; and hearers were urged "to concentrate even more zealously upon the war effort and, if possible, not to take your eye off the ball for a single moment."

BUT the fact remains that, despite these warnings, in the main positive content of the speech the war disappeared from view and was replaced by the elaboration of a post-war programme, inevitably of a controversial character; likely to increase, rather than allay, domestic controversy on post-war party alignments and other issues of division; and appearing to make, by the parallel silence on all concrete questions of the war, the diversion to post-war issues, not as a supplement to the consideration of war problems, but as a substitute for any closer treatment of the urgent problems of the war.

IT is instructive to compare the last broadcast of the Prime Minister in November, 1942, with the present broadcast. The last broadcast in November spoke of Africa as the springboard to Europe, the situation in France, the situation in Italy, the military fronts, the gigantic preparations of the Nazi war machine in Europe, and on this basis warned against all post-war speculations and called the nation to the battle:—

> It is not much use pursuing these speculations further at this time, for no one can possibly know what the state of Europe or of the world will be when the Nazi and Fascist tyrannies have been finally broken. The dawn of 1943 will soon loom red before us, and we must brace ourselves to cope with the trials and problems of what must be a stern and terrible year.

All this has now passed into silence. The "dawn of 1943" has already "loomed red before us." It is broad day. But the speaker's note has changed. Has the situation grown less serious, less urgent? It has grown more serious, more urgent. But despite the formal warnings at the beginning and at the end, the war has, in the main portion of the speech, disappeared from view. The broadcast of November, 1942, is the grim comment on the broadcast of March, 1943.

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ON the Second Front—silence. But a great deal on the prospects of the post-war electrical industry and the delightful picture of television in every home—an idyllic message to the citizens of the battered homes of Kharkov, brought back under the heel of the Nazi executioners, thanks to our inaction, or to the guerillas of the Haute Savoie, abandoned to their fate. On the experience of the war in the past six months, the Soviet winter offensive, the annihilation of whole Nazi armies, presenting us with a unique opportunity, which we failed to take—silence. On the new Nazi offensive —silence. On the loss of Kharkov and Byelgorod—silence. On the new super-mobilisation of the Nazi military machine in Europe, and the need to strain every nerve and resource and speed of action to meet it—silence.

WHY was there no attempt to awaken the nation from the present moods of blind complacency and remote preoccupations to the formidable realities of the war situation and the tasks to be faced? Was this transference of the focus from the war to post-war to be regarded as the counterpart of the strategy which delays decisive military action and sees the war in terms of a long-term perspective—"some time next year" or "the year after," *i.e.*, 1944 or 1945 as the decisive year? Never was there such need for a trumpet call to the nation to awaken to the stern tasks of the war. That trumpet call was not sounded in the Premier's broadcast.

WHAT is the real position? After three months of 1943, where do we stand? The resumed offensive in Africa is of vital importance. But is this local offensive in Africa, engaging a minute fraction of Hitler's forces—less than he has been enabled to transfer from Western Europe to the East, by our inaction—a substitute for action in Europe? Can we be satisfied that our mobilisation and pace of action is at all comparable to the super-mobilisation and drive which Hitler is now carrying through in order to recover his position and make 1943 the decisive year? Can we be satisfied with the internal political situation or the diplomatic situation as the expression of the unity of all forces and wills for the supreme aim of decisive and speedy victory over Fascism? Hard facts must be faced. The sooner they are faced, the better for our health and prospects. If they are not faced, all talk of post-war reconstruction is a meaningless farce, a smug hypocrisy, a make-believe game of chasing the will o' the wisp—or a cover for other aims.

NOTHING is to be gained by living in a dream-world, and ignoring the hard facts of the war as if they were of no concern to the people ("It is not the people's job, or Parliament's, to plot the daily course of battle; but they can guide the War Cabinet in its decisions on peace policy"—*Daily Herald*, March 22, 1943). What is the position? The loss of Kharkov, the loss of Byelgorod, the advance of the new Nazi counter-offensive in the Donetz Basin is the sharpest warning yet to the United Nations. It is the warning of the price of delay of Anglo-American action in Europe; and the price may be higher yet with every day of delay. It is the warning that Hitler has been enabled by this delay to achieve the very thing which he should never have been allowed to attempt—to gather his forces anew in order to make a stand and even to threaten a new offensive, which may strike yet in more than one direction.

IT is, above all, the warning, the grim warning of war, to the blind passivity, illusions and self-deceptions which have been widely prevalent in Britain and the United States, and which have been fostered by official expression, during these critical months: the illusions which tolerated inaction, which saw in the advance of the Soviet winter offensive the

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guarantee of rapid automatic victory and Nazi collapse, without the necessity of major effort or sacrifice from the British and American peoples, and which therefore deemed the moment opportune to turn aside from the war to domestic and post-war issues. It is now necessary to awaken from the daydreams, and to face the plain tasks of the war, which enters on its most intense battles.

HISTORY will not lightly forgive the absence of Anglo-American action in Europe in the early months of 1943. History will not lightly forgive the inane complacency, the jubilation over victory already won, the self-satisfied taunts at Nazi mobilisation, the superior official sneers at every demand for action, which made possible the transference of the key divisions, the key armoured and motorised divisions of Hitler's anti-invasion army from France to the East to regain Kharkov, won at the cost of limitless Soviet blood, sacrifices and brilliant strategy in the face of superior forces. History will not lightly forgive the supine passivity of a Parliament which, in these crucial months of the war, could devote three days to the Beveridge Report, one week to the election of a new Speaker, or settle down to the leisurely consideration of one hundred amendments to the Catering Bill, but could not give one day to the consideration of the war.

HISTORY will not lightly forgive the abdication of leadership of an official labour movement which, in its central organ, spread in two million copies, on the day that the evacuation of Kharkov was announced, could devote its entire editorial to an abusive tirade against another section of the labour movement for the crime of urging unity in the struggle against Fascism. History will not lightly forgive the brazen crassness of an Ambassador who, in the moment of the most terrific battle in the world's record, could find reason to complain that more publicity was given to the heroism of the men fighting than to the trade-mark of origin of a tiny fraction of the materials supplied; of a Minister who could dismiss the call of an ally, fighting with the last ounce of his resources, and summoning the long overdue action of another ally still waiting in his tent, as a "catchpenny phrase"; or of an Administration which could find it appropriate to celebrate Hitler's new advance and the agony of Kharkov by summoning six more Anglo-American Conferences to discuss technical aspects of plans for the post-war reorganisation, under suitable auspices, of the martyred nations of Europe.

THE present crisis of the war is military, diplomatic, and political. The central military problem governs every other issue; but it is itself complicated by adverse diplomatic and political factors. At a time when the objective conditions were never more favourable for the speedy victory of the United Nations by prompt and effective combined action, the absence of such combined action is enabling the Axis to a certain extent to recover its forces, and even, despite the heavy blows inflicted by the Soviet winter offensive, to represent anew a definite threat to the United Nations in the coming year. The Axis, now with inferior forces in every sphere, is still able to maintain an advantageous position, and even to renew its menace of offensive action, solely because a great part of the superior forces of the United Nations, the main part of the Anglo-American forces are not yet engaged in action against the enemy. This is the crux of the war situation. This is the most important issue before the British and American peoples to-day. This is the issue which is concretely expressed in the question of the Anglo-American offensive in Europe. The answer to this question will determine, not only the immediate prospect of the war, but the whole future relations of the

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partners of the United Nations, the future course of world politics, and the future of every domestic question in Britain or America.

THE facts are plain beyond dispute. The strength, audacity and superior strategy of the Soviet winter offensive (which had been originally planned to coincide with the Anglo-American offensive in Western Europe, and which had to be carried forward under the far more difficult conditions of an isolated offensive against the overwhelming bulk of the main Axis forces—240 divisions, according to Stalin's statement in November, as against the 15 divisions or one-sixteenth the proportion in Northern Africa) had by February thrown the Axis forces into extreme confusion, disorganisation and peril, in a retreat with heavy losses. These losses, according to Stalin's Order of the Day on February 23, included, within three months, the loss of one million men (700,000 killed and 300,000 prisoners), as well as of 7,000 tanks, 4,000 planes and 17,000 guns, or more than the equivalent of the total Anglo-American supplies to the Soviet Union in twenty months. 112 Axis divisions had been smashed.

THE extremity of the peril menacing the whole Nazi regime was admitted by Hitler in his speech of March 21:—

If any of our people had still been in doubt about the full seriousness of this gigantic struggle on land, sea and in the air—this matter of life or death—then the winter which lies behind us would remove their last doubts. . . . Later historians will tell how great was the danger during this past winter.

General Dittmar on March 8 described what the winter situation had meant:—

Our front had collapsed. It needed weeks and weeks to cope with the collapse, and more time to dam the flood. Like a raging fire the Russian break-through on the Don rapidly spread wider and wider. The peril became acute that our Caucasian army would be completely cut off. It spread to Voronezh and Orel and from there to the central sector, where piecemeal destruction of our front became an acute danger. One breach close to another was opened here. We actually lived from hand to mouth.

Such was the situation of unparalleled opportunity for action from the West, with the minimum of difficulty, against depleted and enfeebled forces, to ensure speedy and complete victory.

WHAT saved the Nazi regime from collapse, and made possible the desperate measures for recovery, on the basis of the shortened line, in the most recent period? One thing, and one thing only; the absence of Anglo-American action in the West. The old deadly "non-intervention," which had enabled Fascism to conquer Spain, Austria and Czechoslovakia, now reappeared in a new and modified, but still deadly form (corresponding to the changed situation of the old Munichites, no longer able directly to control policy, but still strong enough powerfully to influence it and to hamper effective anti-Fascist action, owing to the weakness of the anti-Fascist representatives in the Government). The new policy was no longer total "non-intervention," nor was it total intervention. It operated within the framework of an alliance for the complete destruction of Fascist tyranny, thus reflecting the basic change in the situation. But the strategy fell short of the alliance. The strategy still partook of the nature of partial intervention, reflecting a compromise between conflicting forces, and expressed itself, in the military sphere, in the confinement of action to partial action in a secondary region with limited forces, while holding the main forces passive at a time when their action could have been decisive. This gave Fascism a new lease of life in the critical months of 1943.

ONCE again the facts are beyond dispute. In January Veliki Luki fell; the siege of Leningrad was raised; the Sixth Army was annihilated before Stalingrad; Field Marshal Paulus surrendered; the days of mourning were proclaimed in Germany. In January the

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Anglo-American Conference of Government representatives and staff experts of the two Western Powers met at Casablanca. According to Churchill's account in his speech on February 11, a free hand was left to the staff experts, save for the general admonition "for more weight to be put into their attacks and more speed into their dates." The only public proclamation of the results achieved was the affirmation of the general aim of "unconditional surrender" of the enemy and the preparation of a plan for nine months ahead. As the practical outcome has made clear, and as was already implicit in Churchill's speech of February 11, the decision was reached that there was to be no immediate Second Front alongside the advancing Soviet offensive (on the alleged new plea, since the old claim of deficiency of men and materials could no longer be maintained, that the U-boat menace must first be conquered before any offensive action in Europe could be attempted—although, in fact, the U-boat menace had not prevented the transport in November without loss of half a million men and their equipment on the far more difficult route to North Africa, and the shipping situation was explicitly stated to be improved since November). Hitler read the signs and breathed a sigh of relief. The orders were given for the transfer of the crack troops hitherto held for the anti-invasion army in France to be dispatched to supplement the forces before Kharkov and establish a formidable local superiority of armoured power. The face of the war began to show a change.

ALREADY on January 31, seven days after the completion of the Casablanca Conference, the Soviet Information Bureau reported:—

In addition to the troops earlier transferred to the Soviet front, the German High Command moved, since the end of November, nineteen more divisions and three tank divisions to the Soviet front.

These included eleven divisions transferred from Germany, and eleven divisions from France, Belgium and Norway.

Besides this, nine other divisions were on the way from the West to the Soviet front.

On February 15 the Soviet Information Bureau supplemented this report:—

Since January 31, six of these German divisions have already made their appearance on the Soviet front.

Here are the names and numbers of the divisions which arrived from France on the Soviet-German front since January 31: The 711th, 335th, 257th and 33rd Infantry Divisions; the "Reich" and "Adolf Hitler" S.S. Tank Divisions.

On February 26 the head of the Soviet Information Bureau, Alexandrov, stated:—

To meet our offensive, the German Command is compelled to bring up reserves not only from Germany, but 30 divisions from Holland, Belgium, France and the Balkans.

On March 9 the Soviet High Command reported the arrival in the Donetz Basin of the twelve new divisions from Western Europe:—

In the Donetz Basin region, the enemy re-equipped the eight tank and five infantry divisions which were dispersed and smashed in previous battles, and recently threw into the region twelve fresh divisions from Western Europe, of which four were tank divisions, one a motorised division, and seven infantry divisions.

In this way the Germans concentrated in this narrow sector twelve tank, one motorised and twelve infantry divisions—twenty-five divisions in all.

On March 15 the evacuation of Kharkov was announced. The price was being paid for what Casablanca failed to accomplish.

FASCISM has always operated, both on the military, and on the diplomatic-political front (fifth column penetration, Munichites, inner political disintegration of a country to be attacked, operations of its "friends across the frontiers" to prepare the way, paralyse the action of the armed forces, and finally open the frontiers and establish a vassal Government). This combined technique has been the secret of all its successes (Spain, France, Norway). Where there has been resistance to this combined technique, Fascism has failed to conquer. Britain was saved from capitulation in 1940, not only by the resistance of the R.A.F., and the massive strength of the

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Soviet Union holding 85 Nazi divisions and half the Luftwaffe on the Eastern front and thus preventing a full military onslaught, but also by the replacement of Chamberlain by Churchill, expressing the popular will to resistance, even though still with the Munichites left in dangerously powerful positions, and leading at first only to a stalemate situation of the war until the British-Soviet Alliance. Where there was for the first time both adequate military preparedness, complete prior destruction of the fifth column and full national unity, in the Soviet Union, the "invincible" onslaught of Fascism met with its first disasters.

IN the moment of these disasters, and faced with ever greater impending peril, Fascism has turned more and more to its old familiar double technique as its one hope of salvation—the hope to split the enemy by the action of its friends in the opposing camp. There is no other hope of salvation for Fascism before the all-powerful coalition of the United Nations. Therefore, from the moment of the disasters on the Eastern front, every speech of Hitler, Goering and Goebbels, every public declaration of Nazism and its broadcasts has more and more openly appealed to "the gentlemen" in Britain and the United States, to "clear-thinking men" in London and Washington, to come to the rescue of Fascism in the name of the common battle against Communism. Why have these appeals continued, in the face of the perfectly explicit declarations of the Governments against considering any such proposals and for the "unconditional surrender" of the enemy? Because words alone are not enough, until they are substantiated by corresponding actions. So long as there is no Second Front in Western Europe, so long as the Soviet Union is left to bear the brunt alone, so long as that vast, exposed and vulnerable rear, seething with popular discontent, is left so strangely free from embarrassment by the mighty armed forces of Britain and the United States, held inactive, so long it is inevitable that the hope still fortifies the anxious hearts of the Nazi leaders that their friends are yet after all powerful in London and Washington, and that they may still be saved.

HOW have the Western Powers met this onslaught? Let an organ by no means suspect of extreme views, the London *Economist*, give its judgment of the situation. In an editorial article, "The Writing on the Wall," the *Economist* declares:—

> If Hitler can achieve the polarisation of forces which paralysed the Europe of Munich and broke the France of 1940, he may still hope, not only to destroy any chance of a lasting peace, but also to win the war.
>
> All Germany's recent manoeuvres have been aimed at re-creating the paralysis of Left and Right. In propaganda the theme is the immensity of the Bolshevist menace. Russia's military successes have been played up, not down. It is now in the Nazis' interests to portray themselves as the last breakwater against the Russian flood. . . .
>
> Nor do the Western Powers seem to be standing up too well to this insidious onslaught. The Darlan episode was the first blow to the spirit of resistance inside Europe. The arrangement with Otto of Austria, providing for an Austrian detachment of the United States Army, was not reassuring. Nor was the timing of Mgr. Spellman's visit to the Vatican, coming as it did on top of Ciano's appointment as Ambassador to the Holy See, and happening, most unfortunately, to coincide with Ribbentrop's visit to Rome. It begins to look as though the Germans may have won a round in their diplomatic offensive. Nor does the disposition of a few people in the United States to make the present material balance of the common war effort in cash or kind a basis for bargaining about the post-war world improve the look of the picture.
>
> Is the Grand Alliance really being pushed, however gradually, down the path of disintegration—long before the military issue has been decided? If the United Nations see the writing on wall in time, the drift, if drift there is, can be arrested. The British Government, which so far has played a singularly passive role, has a special responsibility. (*Economist*, March 6, 1943.)

This is a sufficiently serious warning from a responsible organ of opinion. But it is not only the British Government that has a special responsibility. The British people have a special responsibility—and this includes every political party, demo-

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cratic organisation and leadership that stands for the victory of the United Nations.

THERE is, in short, not only a military crisis of the war. There is also a diplomatic crisis. And the two are closely interconnected. The military passivity, or partial action, is the breeding ground for the dubious diplomatic intrigues and increasing more or less open pro-Fascist propaganda seeking to undermine victory. The solution to both aspects of the crisis lies in the field of action. The solution does not lie in proliferating an endlessly extending series of haggling conferences on the details of post-war reorganisation, while the plain and urgent needs of the war are left untackled. That way can even increase the danger of a rift, of needless divisions and suspicions which play into the hands of pro-Fascist intriguers. There is room and need for appropriate diplomatic interchanges and conferences alongside military action. But the decisive solution, the indispensable condition of unity, lies and must lie in full-scale joint military action and co-operation, which alone can create the basis of full confidence for tackling all the other problems.

HERE is the central problem, towards the solution of which all efforts need to be directed. The opening of the Anglo-American offensive in Europe, of the Second Front in Western Europe, of the joint battle of the millions of the British and American armies alongside the Soviet armies and the peoples of Europe for the final destruction of the evil powers of Nazism and Fascism into "death, dust and ashes"—this would blow into thin air all the underhand pro-Fascist intrigues, all the doubts and suspicions, all the whisperings of "appeasement" "before the war enters on its final deadly phase"; it would cement the alliance of the United Nations and the unity of the peoples, and prepare the way for the solution of all the post-war problems after victory on the basis of the will of the peoples.

BUT the key to this solution lies in the political situation in Britain and the United States. In order to achieve effective common action, to defeat the pro-Fascist intriguers, to strengthen the hands of the Governments in the struggle against Fascism and press them forward along the path of full-scale joint offensive action for the speedy defeat of Fascism, the forces of the people must be strong and united, clear of purpose, inflexible in anti-Fascist determination and the will to victory, and organised to make effective their political will. This depends above all upon the role of the labour movement, leading all the democratic anti-Fascist sections of opinion of the widest masses of the people. It is here that we come to the crux of the problem. If there is weakness, confusion and division here, it will inevitably reflect itself in the entire situation. The main danger does not lie in the manoeuvres of the pro-Fascist intriguers, who by no means represent the wishes and feelings of the overwhelming majority of the people. The main danger lies in the confusions and divisions of the labour and democratic movement; for it is only in such a situation that the manoeuvres of the hostile anti-democratic forces, who work to sabotage action and undermine victory, can make headway.

THE record of these recent months has revealed sharply these dangers in the home situation, no less than in the military position and in the field of diplomatic relations. The same military inaction, or delay of large-scale action, which has had its harmful effects on the course of the war, has also had its harmful effects on the home political situation, and has reflected itself in the growth of tendencies to political disintegration and confusion; the switching of public attention from the war to absorption in domes-

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tic issues of division or post-war programme-making; the confusions over by-elections; breakaway tendencies on the Left, in response to the provocations from the Right, leading to demands for the rupture of the coalition against Fascism.

ALL these present burning issues of the war, the political situation and the labour movement will come up in the sharpest form before the Labour Party Conference at Whitsun, whose agenda is now being considered by the labour organisations. Two paths lie before the Labour Party. One is the positive path of advance: the achievement of unity of the labour movement by Communist affiliation; the strengthening of the political life, activity and organisation of the movement; the strengthening of the role of its representatives in the Government and in the conduct of the war; the isolation and defeat of the Munichite enemies of the people; the active leading role of the labour movement, rallying all sections of democratic anti-Fascist opinion in the nation, to press forward in alert response, equally to the tasks of the war and to the domestic issues affecting the lives of the people, along the lines of a united policy which would ensure speedy victory and, in association with the fight for victory, would ensure the democratic advance of the people and lay the foundations for further advance after victory.

THIS is the positive way forward, the only militant policy. The other path is the negative path (wrongly described in some quarters as "Left"), put forward by certain elements, either hopelessly disillusioned and defeatist in outlook, or endeavouring to exploit current discontents for adventurist and dangerous purposes; the path of ending national unity against Fascism; for Labour to come out of the Government; to leave a free field in the Government for the most reactionary pro-Fascist forces; and thus to lead to disintegration equally of the labour movement and of national unity in the struggle against Fascism. This second path, which finds its expression in the demand for the ending of the electoral truce and the withdrawal of Labour from the Government, would be equally disastrous for the labour movement and for the cause of victory over Fascism. The delegates to the Labour Party Conference, and all the labour organisations who are mandating them, will have the responsibility to see that the path chosen is the first: that the labour movement advances along the path of unity and strength, and of practical response and leadership on all the urgent issues arising from the war.

THE response of the people of this country at the present moment will have a decisive influence on the further development of the war and on the possibility of victory over Fascism in 1943. We cannot be satisfied with the achievement of the first three months of 1943. But the remedy is in our hands. All the conditions are present for victory, provided only we mobilise the will and the action to fight with our full strength, to clear out of the path the obstacles of pro-Fascist sabotage, to hasten the offensive in Europe, and to maintain unity. It should be the concern of every serious member of the labour movement to see that the labour movement fulfils its role of leadership by rallying and uniting the entire nation for the fulfilment of these aims.

R. P. D.

March 22, 1943.

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Hitler's Secret Weapon

by IVOR MONTAGU

THE high strategy of the war is still an exercise in simple arithmetic.

The "expert" myth is still boloney and a schoolboy can count how things are going.

The sum in potential resources remains as much as ever a problem in imaginary quantities, about as realistic when it comes to actual war-winning as a primitive beating a tom-tom to bolster up his courage and terrify the enemy.

In plain, concrete terms of hens and eggs and divisions actually in action the sum still adds up to exactly the same situation as before the incantations of Casablanca.

Round and round the walls of Jericho marched Joshua blowing his trumpet. Round and round from Westminster to Washington, from Africa to Adana, perambulate the Allied leaders engaged in similar exercises. But the walls don't fall down.

Germany had on the Soviet Front a total of 240 of its own and satellite divisions, explained Marshal Stalin on November 6, 1942.

When the Allies distract eighty of them we will deal with the rest. The sole reason that the Germans have so far escaped disaster is the continued absence of the Second Front in Europe. Q.E.D. A simple proposition.

That was the sum then. The most gigantic and thorough-paced victory in history has shattered or wiped out well over one hundred enemy divisions. But it has also necessarily reduced the Eastern Front from round 2,500 miles to round 1,500. The enemy can retain the same density of concentration along the front as before and maintain the same margin for concentrating an army of manoeuvre. The values of the x and y have changed, but the validity of the equation remains constant.

What, then, has schoolmaster Stalin achieved by the winter offensive? Not won the war for us; that remains dreamland. But he has proved on his blackboard his proposition that we could win the war together. He has disposed of the bluff of Goebbels and the Imperial Policy Group: the legend that Hitler was about to annihilate the Red Army and that its collapse would leave any Anglo-American force on the Continent as isolated as the British after the Fall of France. The disproof was thorough. What Hitler could not do while x was valued in crack troops is how much the more beyond his powers when its total includes scrapings.

Come on, you have no longer grounds for hesitation.

But the hestitation increases in stubbornness.

Marshal Stalin, the "great genius," the "tried warrior," the "loved historical figure," all this suffices for tribute on speech days.

But it is Marshal Stalin, the author of "the catchpenny phrase," when it comes to official declarations of policy.

"Unconditional Surrender" stays a slogan. Twenty Years' Alliance is expressed practically in terms of a modicum of material. While in the meantime mighty armies, "terrifying" accumulations of weapons, sit snug in their bases, practising the non-violence, not of Gandhi, but of Hess.

It is not pleasant to be despised. It is not pleasant to be a country which, while men of free soul fight the enemy all over the continent with their bare hands, sits back boasting of how heroic it was three years ago. And explains, bristling with weapons, that it is not yet ready to get to grips with the enemy.

It is not pleasant to realise that it was precisely after the scenario of Casablanca, the opera-bouffe of the bogged offensive,

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the paraphrase of the *Pirates of Penzance* ("We go, we go! We march to meet the foe!" "Yes, but you don't go.") that Hitler decided he could in safety still further denude the West, and take another dozen divisions to the East to resume the hanging of the still surviving Kharkov citizens. Yet, after all, even Churchill signalled to him, with the statement to the Commons that joint operations with the Red Army would have to wait priority on settlement of the war at sea—postponement to a sort of Submarine Kalends.

What is holding up and delaying the operation that not only Stalin, but President Roosevelt too, has defined as the operation necessary to secure Hitler's defeat?

Powerful forces have come out into the open and proclaimed their objectives.

First America. There is the Hearst press with its argument: Ignore Europe! It does not matter whether Axis or Allies succeed there. Hitler is white, tread down the yellow man (aggressor and aggressed alike.)

There is the ex-Isolationist argument in Congress: Hitler must not be beaten before Japan, in case thereafter U.S.S.R. (and Britain too) cool toward the war in the Far East. Ring him round, weaken him, hold him back—O.K.—but don't finish him off, keep him in existence, as a threat till Britain and U.S.S.R. have helped finish Japan.

There is the Luce talk (Time, Fortune, Life, Booth): that America's future lies in Asia, Pacific bases must be extorted from China, Holland, Britain, U.S.S.R. in their time of need, that is, while Hitler still threatens them.

And there is Wall Street with the *New York Times*, demanding as condition of "continued aid" a prior "understanding" with the U.S.S.R. to include its dismemberment—the tearing-up of the Atlantic Charter with its guarantees of integrity and self - determination — blackmailed Soviet assent to Fascist re-subjugation of the Lithuanians, Latvians, Esthonians and, indeed, other nations, the break-up of Byelorussia and the Ukraine.

More cautiously expressed, but an infallible index, is the coolness of Kemsley and Camrose. The venomous sneers of Simon hold a warning we neglect at our peril. The *Catholic Herald* (March 12, 1943) girding around itself the pseudo-religious cloak it counts on to enable it to brew poison with impunity, reveals the entire bag of save Fascism tricks.

The leader suggests that the Pope summoned the American Archbishop Spellman to "see whether this latest and bloodiest phase of the war may yet be avoided."

We suspect that Europe is to be attacked, not only because this seems an inevitable step towards the defeat of Nazism, but also because there is a strong desire, fanned by Left publicists, to destroy everything that can be fitted into the term of abuse, Fascism. . . . If this is the case, we are justified in asking for further reflection before we embark on the bitter and prolonged road of Continental invasion, which, it is hoped, will achieve an ideological end with which a good portion of our people and the people of America are far from being in sympathy. . . . Are we absolutely satisfied that before embarking on this final assault we have done all that is possible to obtain the good-will of the peoples of Europe—of Italy even, of masses of the Germans themselves—who share our hatred of Nazism, but who have been far from satisfied about our own ends? . . . Have we done anything to allay their fears about the replacing of one anti-religious and anti-European ideology by another?

A pretty healthy corpse, lively and kicking out in all directions, that Bolshevik Bogy! Your requiem over it was premature, Mr. Eden.

There is to be no Second Front *now*, because the destruction now of Hitlerism could only come about by the strengthening of the Soviet Union, by the strengthening in the course of the struggle the people's power in Europe. That is the aim of these gentry. The perspective of the eleven million strong U.S. Army ready to take the field in 1945. The pretty plot of abstaining from freeing France until order can be maintained by a 300,000 army organised and officered by Franco-Frenchmen while Giraud (who "does not under-

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stand politics") is paying attention to the war.

And as a corollary of the postponement of present landing in Europe in case the popular resistance movement is thereby strengthened, the next logical step is the damping-down of such resistance as exists. Algiers radio, naming the French Francs-Tireurs terrorists and calling for sabotage in France to cease lest it provoke the enemy. The B.B.C., joining its voice to Laval in imploring the young men of the Haute Savoie mountains to pack up and go home quietly—to await deportation. General Sikorski telling the *New York Times* that Soviet parachutists and air-borne arms to aid Polish guerillas is interference in Poland's internal affairs. The exile Yugoslav Government financing its agent Mihailovitch to crush the resistance movement, while slanderously labelling the patriot resisters (the credit of whose resistance it tries to steal) "Reds," just like any Goebbels gramophone.

And to deal with this situation progressives and Labour leaders in Britain sit playing with the Beveridge building-blocks of post-war games, responding to every provocation of ruthless Tory or wrecking employer, toying with the idea of a walk-out from the Government, abandonment of the Home Office and Ministry of Labour to the die-hards, and delivery of Churchill—representative of that section of the ruling class whose interest, being bent on no settlement with Hitlerism, marches for the moment with that of progressive humanity—as a bound and unsupported prisoner to the Munichites.

Stalin has given a warning.

On November 6, 1942, he said: ". . . the absence of a Second Front against Fascist Germany may end badly for all freedom-loving countries, including the Allies themselves."

Once before Stalin gave a warning that went unheeded by the peoples of the Western democracies.

It was on March 10, 1939:—

"The big and dangerous political game started by the supporters of the policy of Non-Intervention may end in a serious fiasco for them."

But the Labour and other democratic leaders who were content, sheep-like, to leave the handling of the pre-war aggression situation, the negotiation of the peace front and Anglo-Soviet relations, to the "expert" care of diplomats, have learned no lesson. They assume that the Second Front can likewise be left to "expert" care, in this case that of mythical military professionals. They hear no Kemsley, see no Astor and forbid the speaking of criticism.

The trouble is that these children have done their sum wrong. They have added in the unrealised assets, and calculated victory a certainty whether the Second Front comes soon or late. They have forgotten that history is in movement, and that, when the time comes to count up, the assets may have changed to the other side of the equation.

For the Second Front is the key to all. In its absence there is a vacuum wherein all conflicting ambitions between imperialist groupings in U.S.A. and the British Empire, all anti-Soviet longings of U.S. and British reactionaries, all softening of war-will and harmful dreams of victory without sacrifice, find ready scope. In its presence they would be dispersed. With great bodies of British and American men actually in action, their lives depending upon sacrifice at home and the achievements of the Red Army in corresponding battle, counsels of distraction and all divisive propaganda would receive the shortest shrift.

Co-operation, confidence, will not come from any number of committees or Treaty signatures, but only from common action for a common aim.

Meanwhile delay and complacency, the secret weapon of Hitler, is eliminating —by bit-by-bit extermination with starvation or the sword—the finest sons and

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daughters, not only of the Soviet Union, but of all patriot Europe, the indispensable Allies of the peoples of Britain and U.S.A. for their post-war battle to secure liberty and progress against reaction.

What will be left for the invincible armies to liberate in 1945? A cemetery? Europe cannot last so long.

It is in this sense, the sense that history itself does not wait, that Stalin's remark is to be understood. Turn to the full quotation and you will find that it was not a warning alone, but a prediction. A prediction that, because the warning holds good, there must, there will be, a Second Front.

Objective reality moves faster than the cautious time-table of the politicians.

The defeats in the East have had their repercussions in the West.

To replace his losses Hitler has been obliged to squeeze Europe, both for cannon-fodder and factory-fodder, "till the pips squeak." The gloss is rubbed right off the "New Order." The treadmill and the slaughter-pit beneath are exposed to light. Hitler's need to deport and enslave populations destroys the whole façade of his quislings. The French people follow Serb, Croat and Slovene to the hills. If death, if national annihilation comes, at least let it be a death fighting.

Resistance *now* becomes a matter of life and death for the nation. Not all the *Catholic Heralds* whispering in Giraud's ear that resistance without awaiting his orders is a plot of insubordinate Reds serves any longer to disguise the truth from an honest man. Circumstances oblige Hitler to force the issue. The need to resist him *now* forges French unity, the unity of all European patriots. The voices of complacent Colonel Brittons, counselling patience through the air to an imaginary V-army awaiting a time-table devised by Red-tabs sitting round a table, fade before the roar and fury of the peoples forced by objective factors into the struggle for survival *now*.

The roar and fury echoes even across the Channel and across the Atlantic. The delays become intolerable. The professional pretexts become exploded by events. The opposition to immediate action is exposed naked as political. The opponents of unity to overcome all obstacles become exposed as parish-pump lunatics, myopic betrayers of the tasks facing humanity, in face of the gigantic issues that only unity can solve.

The battles of the Donets and the Haute Savoie sound a tocsin to which the people of the Western Allies cannot remain deaf. Before the five meetings at Trafalgar Square are succeeded by another five the Anglo-American leaders will have released their resources into action or been swept into history's dustbin.

But all this will not come about spontaneously. It will come about only in the measure and at the speed at which we rouse ourselves to respond to reality and strike Hitler's secret weapon from his hand.

The Editor of LABOUR MONTHLY will be very glad to receive contributions in the form of finished articles or of suggestions and data for articles. The customary proviso must be made that no responsibility is undertaken for manuscripts sent to him nor can he promise to enter into correspondence regarding contributions not accepted.

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The French Communist Party in the Battle

by FERNAND GRENIER

(Member of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party)

IN June 1940 France lost a battle. What were the causes of this great disaster?

(1) The policy pursued by the French Governments of the period. Ever since September, 1939, the war had not only not taken on an anti-Hitlerite character, but became from day to day more clearly the long-sought opportunity for revenge against the masses of the people. Proofs of this are: the suppression of *L'Humanité* and *Ce Soir* three days before the launching of the conflict; the banning of the French Communist Party; the illegal setting aside of the mandate of the Communist deputies; the trial of these deputies in camera and the heavy sentences which followed it; the opening of concentration camps; the dissolution of thousands of local trade unions; the suppression in the factories of all the gains won during the Popular Front.

(2) The war had taken on a clearly anti-Soviet character: furious campaigns against the U.S.S.R. after the signature of the German-Soviet Pact (even though this Pact was only the outcome of Munich and of the failure of the Anglo-Franco-Russian negotiations in the spring of 1939 —a failure the anti-Soviet clique desired); military aid to the Finland of Marshal Mannerheim; the setting-up by General Weygand of plans for the invasion of the Caucasus with the help of the French armies of Syria and Lebanon.

(3) There existed a Fifth Column whose real power was unsuspected. It had ramifications which penetrated into the high ranks of the Administration, the General Staff, political spheres (Déat, Doriot, Laval, Bergery, Philippe Henriot, Chasseigne, etc.), trade union circles (Belin). The action of these traitors made itself particularly felt during the battle of France.

(4) The out-of-date ideas of the General Staff. The theories developed before the war by Colonel de Gaulle (as he then was) on the mechanical character of the next war were considered heretical. Marshal Pétain, as shown by the debates at the Riom trial, had opposed the extension of the Maginot Line as far as Dunkirk. In short, the most old-fashioned military ideas were in favour.

Further, one can add to the essential causes of the French defeat the strategical error of sending our best armies to Belgium, the dagger thrust in the back by Fascist Italy, and other important but secondary facts on which it would take too long to dwell.

II. AFTER THE DEFEAT

In June, 1940, there is general confusion. An army of five million men crushed in six weeks, and nearly two million officers and men prisoners. Civilians tramp along the bombarded roads in their millions—roads which have become bottlenecks and are drenched in blood. Public opinion, or the immense majority of it, is persuaded that England will not hold and that the victory of Germany is henceforth assured. The Hitlerite invaders behave correctly: they install popular soup kitchens in the poor quarters of the great towns, and their military bands give popular concerts. Intense propaganda for collaboration between France and Germany is made by the newspapers and wireless stations, all controlled by the invader. They insist at great length on the "generosity" of the Führer, who has permitted a French Government to be installed at Vichy. But already (beginning of July, 1940) appears the first underground leaflet of the French Communist Party, which ends thus:

As always, in no matter what circumstances, in these days of harsh trials, horrors and endless cala-

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mities, we, Communists, have been and will stay with our people. Their fate is our fate. We believe profoundly in their strength and in their future, in the future of France. Our people will not perish. Their will and their love of liberty will not be beaten down by the evil forces of traitors, exploiters, robbers and conquerors.

The French masses in the occupied zone, abandoned by all parties, abandoned by the Vichy Government, thus learn that the Communists are always there and that the French Communist Party still exists. The hope of a resurrection will be reborn.

The invaders soon take off the mask and show their true face. On October 5, 1940, 300 militants of the party and trade unions in Paris and neighbourhood, soldiers recently demobilised, are arrested by the French police on the orders of the Gestapo; a concentration camp is opened 50 kilometres from Paris to receive these men, elected by the working class and its staunch defenders. A month later the students want to lay flowers on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Champs-Elysées; the Hitlerites fire on the crowd: there are dead and wounded, and the universities are closed for a week. In May, 1941, it is the miners of the Pas-de-Calais who make acquaintance with the "new order in Europe." They strike to get better food; the Gestapo replies by imprisoning all the trade union delegates and massacring all the Communist mayors.

The resistance, thus begun, will increase considerably after Hitler's aggression against the U.S.S.R. General von Stulpnagel signs a decree ordering the death penalty for any editor, printer or distributor of Communist leaflets. The people of Paris reply by a patriotic manifestation at the Gare Saint Lazare; the following day the shooting of hostages begins.

Collaboration is stone dead. Resistance will grow from day to day.

III. THE FRANCE OF 1943

On December 20, 1940, the *Daily Telegraph* stated:—

. . . the only party existing, though illegally, being that of the Communists, and over 1,000 of them were arrested last month. They are distributing anti-German tracts with a strong appeal to French patriotic sentiment.

In spite of fierce repression, the French Communist Party has continued to be the great moving spirit of resistance on the country's soil. In France itself it has been able to keep a central organisation, also regional and local organisations. Every week it publishes *L'Humanité* (200 numbers issued), *La Vie Ouvrière* (160 numbers issued); and every month *La Vie du Parti*, a bulletin containing many directives; every quarter its theoretical organ, *Les Cahiers du Bolshevisme*. It has helped to organise the powerful "National Front of Intellectuals," which publishes underground newspapers, magnificently produced, each of which is addressed to a particular category: universities, teachers, students, doctors, writers, architects, engineers, painters, etc. The strength of the party can be assessed by this figure alone: *six million* copies of secret newspapers, leaflets, pamphlets printed in the course of a single year: 1942. The Party has assigned its best and bravest *cadres* to the General Staff of the Francs-Tireurs and Partisans, whose continually growing activity puts the Gestapo on tenterhooks. This is what one of the non-Communist chiefs of French resistance says in an official report:—

The Communist Party has never for a single instant lessened the activity which it has carried on since the armistice; if its propaganda has been muffled and has seemed less active, the reason is that its militants, hunted down, have only been able to act after taking greater precautions.

Its influence on the working masses of the Parisian region remains complete. The Russian resistance, the courage of its fighters, have powerfully helped the Communist Party in its task; the fierce repression of the Germans and the French Police have given to this Party an authority which it certainly did not have before 1939.

Its organisations really keep the Gestapo and the Special Brigades of the National Prefecture of Police in suspense. New among the illegal forces, the Communist militants give proof of admirable pluck. *The underground Communist machinery is organised and directed by men who give proof of a remarkable political sense.*

The party has paid heavy tribute to repression; about 10,000 shot or dead in the

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prisons and camps (amongst whom were Pierre Sémard of the Political Bureau; the deputies Gabriel Péri, Charles Michels, Jean Catelas; six municipal councillors of Paris; numerous mayors of the working-class cities of the North of France and the outskirts of Paris; hundreds of militants). About 40,000 of our comrades are in prison.

The former Socialist Party has begun to reconstitute itself, and there exists a "Socialist Committee of Action" which is secretly bringing out again the central organ *Le Populaire* (seven issues to date). In the heart of this Party in course of reconstruction there is a very strong current of unity with the French Communist Party.

There exist also Gaullist groups, such as "Combat," "Liberation," "Resistance," whose activity was until recently limited to the former unoccupied zone. The chief propaganda instruments of these groups are their underground newspapers and the broadcasts in French from London, listened to every evening by millions of men and women of all classes.

The parties of collaboration, which alone are permitted, are unimportant. Only that of Doriot is very active and collaborates openly with the Gestapo; it has about 30,000 members.

There are but few working-class trade unions with powerful effective forces, but unity of action against the invader has been achieved among militants of varying outlook in the past.

IV. PRESENT TASKS OF THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY

First of all it was necessary to liquidate the influence of Vichy. This task has been accomplished and brought to a successful issue by the common action of all the groups of resistance.

In the second place it was necessary to co-ordinate the action of the groups of resistance. By the Francs-Tireurs and Partisans putting themselves under the control of General de Gaulle; by the French Communist Party joining Fighting France, the rallying of all the forces of liberation is completed. Fighting France to-day represents the aspirations of 90 per cent. of the Frenchmen of France.

One of our fundamental tasks is to struggle with every means against the mass deportations of Frenchmen to Germany, and to make known abroad the sufferings and the sacrifices of the French people so as to hasten the invasion of the Continent.

In developing the spirit of resistance, so magnificently displayed by the officers and sailors of Toulon, the French Communist Party each day brings powerful support to the operations of our British and American Allies in Europe when they take place.

It is also our duty to clarify the situation in North Africa. Our programme is that of all resisting Frenchmen—and they are henceforward the whole of France, except a few traitors: repudiate Vichy; appoint resolute patriots to all posts of authority; re-establish democratic institutions and republican liberties; dissolution of the Fascist groups; liberation of the patriots still in prison; a policy of humane and intelligent understanding of the aspirations of the native masses. It is on these bases that agreement between Fighting France and General Giraud can and must be achieved. Any other policy can only result in maintaining the present difficult situation, and in sowing division among Frenchmen abroad. The Communists will put all forces in action to arrive at this result.

It is by consecrating itself with an everyday devotion to the sacred task of the liberation of the fatherland that the French Communist Party will continue to deserve the confidence of the French people, a confidence won by heavy sacrifices, by the genius of its pilots, Maurice Thorez, Jacques Duclos, Marcel Cachin, and by the lofty spirit of abnegation of all its members.

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Common Wealth or Common Danger

by D. N. PRITT, K.C., M.P.

VARIOUS political groupings and movements, after a certain amount of cutting for partners and one or two changes of name, have recently coalesced into a new political party—or movement aspiring to be a party—under the name of Common Wealth, led mainly by the former Liberal, Sir R. Acland. The headway which it has made among certain sections of the population, and the relatively large minority polls achieved in several by-election contests which it has fought, call for careful examination of its policy and development.

What is this new party? What is it aiming at? Is it needed, that is, is it able to achieve something that no existing party can achieve—for unless it passes that test it can only increase the general confusion by attempting work which can and should be done by existing organisations?

It claims that large numbers of people support it—and its policy of "common ownership"—because they can find no other party or organisation to present their aims and make them effective. Is this correct? And what is this policy of common ownership? Who are the people who are said to feel the need of a new party? What would be the results of its development and extension? These questions call for considered answers.

First, what does it mean by common ownership? It describes it, in a "general indication of the lines along which public policy should be developed," as the "transfer to common ownership of services, industries and companies in which managerial inefficiency or the profit motive is harming the war effort." The question at once arises—an important question at this period when so many millions are awakening to the need of great social changes—whether a party with this main plank is or is not aiming at Socialism? If it is, if it is in substance seeking to propagate the Socialist faith, then after all Socialism is no novelty, and there is a great movement which recruits to Socialism may join. It would require, surely, some very strong argument to justify the establishment of a new organisation just because a Liberal aristocrat and some of his friends have seen the light. But the argument often advanced by Common Wealth supporters to prove that it fulfils a definite need is that it caters for middle-class elements who cannot otherwise be recruited for Socialism.

This argument is a most dangerous one. Whence come these notions that the labour movement does not appeal to the middle class, or that there is no room for that class in the organisations of the movement and that it needs some special segregated organisation? Such notions have neither foundation nor merit; they are both false and disruptive. The labour movement appeals most definitely to the middle class, and has plenty of room for it; indeed, since the middle class must either be won as the ally of the labour movement against the reactionary ruling class or become the tool of reaction against the labour movement, it is vital for us to recruit it into our ranks, for we need every ounce of additional strength we can muster. And if the middle class is to be won for the labour movement, that is, not merely won in principle but made into a real and effective part of the Socialist forces, it must become part of the main movement, join in the main fight and understand its unity of object and purpose with the whole of the movement. To provide it with a special organisation—a sort of Pullman car in the train of progress—is to serve the game of the reactionaries by preventing it from making its weight tell in the common struggle. (And any idea that the middle class can be recruited to Socialism on the shame-faced basis of avoiding both mem-

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bership of the Labour or the Communist Party and the use of the word Socialism is equally false and dangerous.)

So, let it be clear that to recruit middle-class elements into a separate organisation with the object of winning them for Socialism is in truth to lose the bulk of them for the movement altogether.

It can thus be seen that, if Common Wealth is in fact seeking to advocate Socialism, however shyly, and is making a special appeal to the middle classes with that object, its existence as a separate organisation is a definite evil, for it will delay rather than help the Socialist advance.

But it may well be that Common Wealth is not really attempting anything of the sort; it may not be Socialist at all. What is the real position? It makes no clear declaration on the point, but if one looks again at its description of "common ownership" quoted above, and at other "Points" set out in the same "general indication," the nature of its policy becomes pretty clear. Transfer to common ownership is advocated, not primarily as an economic principle, but as an expedient to deal with inefficiency; and the profit motive is rejected, not absolutely, but only when it harms the war effort. And, in another important "Point," that of Equality, what is declared as the object is "greater equality of work, payment sacrifice and opportunity, as between soldiers and civilians, shareholders, directors and workmen, men and women."

This is not Socialism; it has no class basis; indeed, Common Wealth opposes any class movement, and preaches the necessity for the unity of classes in the common interest and for all men of goodwill to come together—high-sounding phrases that have been used in the past by many different kinds of people, not excluding Hitler.

Such a programme is in essence a Liberal one, compatible with the continuation of Capitalism; the only sense in which it is Socialist is that it is in some ways a resuscitation of nineteenth-century Christian Socialism, which, as Engels long ago demonstrated, must always fail through this very defect of refusing to recognise the class-basis of Society and the absolute necessity of the transfer of power to the working class.

A party with any such programme should not and must not be allowed to draw away the working class from its existing parties. It is much worse than merely superfluous; it is dangerous from several points of view. In the first place, at a time when great masses are anxiously thinking of the future and demanding reasonable security after the war without being too clear in their minds as to how to get it, the worst possible course is to draw people away from the labour movement and win them for policies that cannot achieve their objects. It is not surprising that the reactionary forces, particularly anxious at this period to head off the march to Socialism, openly or secretly encourage parties that put forward policies of this kind; they even at times put forward such policies themselves, through such agencies as Zubatov, or Father Gapon, or Déat. In the second place, experience suggests that such parties, lacking definite political principles, may develop in the wrong direction; we have seen similar movements before, and seen them end disastrously; the "New Party" in 1931, for example, started in much the same fashion and in a few years developed into the "British Union of Fascists." And lastly, there is the danger that such a party will attract the support (and thus come under the control) of big business or of unreliable political adventurers. In its short life, Common Wealth has won active support and a good deal of financial help, from a number of rich business men, including one who is a director of something like thirty companies; whilst quite recently the great Rothermere *Sunday Pictorial* has given up a whole page to an article on Common Wealth by Sir R. Acland and added an encouraging editorial. It has also received editorial sup-

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port from the viciously anti-Soviet and pro-Vichy *Catholic Herald*. And among people actively working in the party are a number who have been prominent in other parties and have left or been expelled from them. More serious is the fact that one of its more prominent workers was a member of The Link and of the British National Party, whilst another has until quite recently been associated with the People's Common Law Parliament.

It has, moreover, been seen in co-operation, or at any rate in flirtation, at different times and places, with the I.L.P., the Peace Pledge Union, the Fabian Society, Federal Union and—what is very serious in its directly splitting possibilities and particularly in the danger it creates of an anti-Government and anti-Labour Party block in the House of Commons—with certain elements in the Parliamentary Labour Party. The dangers of all this are obvious.

There is thus reason enough for regarding Common Wealth, whatever the motives of its members, as an organisation from which neither the middle class nor the working class has anything to hope. But in truth it is not merely negatively but positively dangerous, for it is directly disruptive in operation. Consider the circumstances in which Common Wealth is preaching. We are in a time of maximum tension, when mistakes cannot be afforded; when every step must be taken not merely to win the war but to win it at the earliest possible moment; when the highest possible measure of unity, over the widest possible field, is imperative in the face of the general war and post-war position; when we have to remove all sense of frustration and to build—or rebuild—the political and industrial strength and cohesion of the whole movement, in order not merely to cure our own shortcomings but also to meet the subtly growing menace of anti-Soviet intrigues, of Munichism, of reaction generally; when at one and the same moment large masses of the working-class are suffering from disunity and the resulting lack of self-confidence and yet many thousands of them are realising for the first time in their lives that they are vitally concerned in politics. At such a time, nothing could be more disastrously irresponsible than to peddle superficially attractive policies which in truth can bring no remedy, but only fatal divisions and weakness. And it is just at this time that Common Wealth plays into the hands of reaction by denouncing the electoral truce, attacking the Churchill Government, and rejecting National Unity on the ground that it mistrusts the Tories. And, just as the maximum national effort is required to concentrate on the drive forward to the Second Front, it adopts an equivocal attitude which in its total result is extremely discouraging; it talks of "changing" the war into a people's war, thus implying that we have a fight at home to carry through before we can be in a position to fight effectively against our Fascist enemies abroad. It is noticeable that in Sir Richard Acland's article in the *Sunday Pictorial* explaining the aims of Common Wealth there is no mention of the war or of any tasks relating to the war. In practice, indeed, the emphasis of all its propaganda is laid far more on post-war issues than on the vital need for first carrying the war to decisive victory.

The disruptive role, too, is seen both generally in the work of recruiting and propaganda and particularly in the fighting of by-elections. It is not merely that practically every supporter of Common Wealth must inevitably be recruited from among active or potential members of the Labour or the Communist Party. True, to recruit under such circumstances, when the crying need of the working-class movement is to achieve more and more unity, is to do the movement grave disservice. But when it comes actually to take part in by-elections, the disservice is far greater than any mere numerical weakening. At Bristol, for example, a number of Labour Party councillors and others with good records, who represented a good deal of the Labour leader-

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ship in the city, were brought to support Miss Jennie Lee (who, though not officially a Common Wealth candidate, was actively supported by Common Wealth) with the inevitable result of their expulsion and their temporary loss to the labour movement. And if it be said that the apparent failure of the Labour Party leadership, particularly in Parliament, to represent and make effective the views and demands of the great mass of the working class, has created a vacuum which Common Wealth must fill, the answer is that it is doubly and trebly necessary to cure that apparent failure, not by taking steps to increase disunity, but by working inside the labour movement to unite and strengthen it so that it may restore its solidarity and make its policy prevail.

Common Wealth must be judged by its effects, not by its professions or its supposed good intentions. Everything that tends to disrupt and weaken the labour movement is bad; everything that strengthens it is good. And the net result of Common Wealth's work, judged by this measure, is bad; it follows the wrong path, the path of divisions that help only the cause of reaction.

The right course is to advocate and to work for the strength and unity of the labour movement; there is room for all in that movement, and it and it alone can lead us forward to our objectives. Everyone in the labour movement who feels uneasy or frustrated about the electoral truce, or the role of the Labour Party in Parliament, or any other problem of the day, should pause and reflect. If he reflects, he will, I think, soon see that everything must be judged by its effect on the strength of the movement; and that the task of all of us is to consolidate, not to break away.

And, above all, let it not be imagined that this is just a difference between two sections of the progressive movement. It is a crucial question, one on which everything depends; is the labour movement to become strong and effective to win the war and then to shape the peace, or are the forces of reaction to make utterly disastrous headway?

The Road to Labour Unity

II. The Evolution of The Labour Party*

by R. PALME DUTT

THE Labour Party Executive Memorandum against affiliation of the Communist Party (published on February 20), and the Communist Party Reply (published on March 10) constitute the official expression of the two sides of the case on which the Labour and Trade Union organisations will have to judge in June.

The reception of these two documents by the anti-Labour press is of interest. The Labour Party Executive Memorandum against affiliation has been warmly welcomed and applauded by the anti-Labour press. The *Daily Telegraph* has found it "wise" and "sagacious." Provincial press organs of the big combines and press chains most violently hostile to Labour, especially in the main industrial areas, have given it loud publicity and congratulatory editorials. Employers have pasted it up in their factories. The Communist Party reply has been received with frigid silence or hostile comment by the enemies of Labour.

From this reception the alert trade unionist and member of the Labour

* This is the second of a series of three articles on Labour Unity and the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party. The first article, "The Problem of Affiliation," appeared in the March LABOUR MONTHLY. The third article, dealing with the role of Communism in the Labour Movement, will appear in May. The three articles will be republished as a pamphlet (price 6d), and orders can already be placed for this.

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Party will be able to draw practical conclusions. The enemies of the Labour Party desire that the Labour Party should reject the affiliation of the Communist Party. The reason is obvious. They desire to weaken the Labour movement by keeping it divided. This is a significant warning to all members of the Labour Party as to where the true interests of the Labour Party lie.

Last month, in the first article in this series, we discussed the question of Communist affiliation in relation to the urgent needs of the present political situation—the imperative necessity of unity for victory over Fascism and reaction, and for progressive advance.

This month we propose to discuss the same question of Communist affiliation in relation to the interests and progressive advance of the Labour Party, on the background of its whole development up to the present day. The aim will be to show

(1) That the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party is in accordance with the genius and traditions of the British Labour Movement in general, and with the historical basis and development of the Labour Party, in particular;

(2) That the application of the Communist Party for affiliation is not, as has been argued by opponents, a tactical manoeuvre for sectional advantage, but corresponds to the consistent Marxist understanding of the development of the British Labour Movement and its best interests;

(3) That the refusal of Communist affiliation during the recent period has represented a breach with the historical basis of development of the Labour Party, and has had harmful consequences on that development;

(4) That the acceptance of Communist affiliation would most rapidly overcome those harmful consequences, and provide the most favourable conditions for the progressive strengthening and advance of the Labour Party.

* * * * *

The Memorandum of the Labour Party Executive states:—

(1) That "in the last forty years, and in a most remarkable fashion, the Labour Party has steadily extended its power and influence";

(2) That Communism, representing "a policy separate, distinct and different from that of the Labour Party," would be a "continuous embarrassment" to the Labour Party;

(3) That the affiliation of the Communist Party would give rise to the danger of an opposing class alignment or "violently contending factions" in British politics, and would thus endanger the further advance of the Labour Party.

These three propositions constitute the real political kernel of the document; the rest is devoted to secondary and formal constitutional points, which represent no real political difficulty, and which half an hour's serious negotiation could clear up; or to stereotyped propaganda charges against Communism, which reflect conventional current misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the Communist position.

But in these three propositions is expressed a basic viewpoint which reveals a startling blindness to the plain facts of the historical development of the Labour Party, or of the present position, no less than to the aims and policy of Communism in relation to the central aim of an independent political movement of the organised working class.

Undoubtedly during the past forty years the development of the Labour Party has constituted a major achievement of the British labour movement, and the central fact of the British political situation. The representatives of the Labour Party Executive are justified in calling attention to the great significance of this development. But they are not justified in trying to turn upside down the significance of this development, or in seeking to slur over, behind a generalised picture of steady advance, the serious signs of a certain setback and lost dynamic in the past decade, which should give rise to concern rather than self-satisfied complacency.

Wherein has lain the significance of the development of the Labour Party over the past forty years?

Every historian and political observer, no matter of what school or colour, would agree that its significance has lain precisely in the fact that it has reflected the advance towards independent political activity of the organised workers and working-class organisations, leading wide sections of the people. The development

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of the Labour Party in the twentieth century, viewed over the broad canvas of forty years, has reflected the replacement of the old nineteenth-century alternation of Whig and Tory, of Liberalism and Conservatism, of the traditional parties of the ruling capitalist class, by the increasing emergence of the independent political movement (still incomplete, still with many remains of dependence on capitalist politics, or confusions of programme, but emerging, with growing consciousness and stature) of the organised workers as a conscious political force opposed to the older capitalist parties. In other words, it has reflected, not the retreat from class politics, but the advance towards increasingly open class politics, towards the aim of the united class alignment of the working-class and its allies against monopoly capital, with all the consequent "violent contentions" to which this has already given rise and will further give rise. This is the red thread governing the development of the Labour Party, and the secret of its success; whatever has run contrary to this has weakened the Labour Party.

Communism, so far from being in conflict with this aim and development, which has found expression in the Labour Party, is the clearest, most conscious and consistent expression of this aim of the independent political movement of the organised working class against monopoly capital, and therefore has a helpful and indispensable contribution to make within the developing broad movement, represented by the Labour Party.

* * * * *

This advance of the Labour Party has not been continuous or uniform over these forty years. It has had to contend with many alien influences, which have sought to turn it aside from its role as the expression of the advancing class movement of the workers. These alien influences received clearest expression in the career and philosophy of MacDonald, who remained in fact a Liberal throughout his life, and whose final outcome, as an open enemy of the Labour Party, revealed, for all to see, the true significance of his philosophy.

In general, it may be said that the success of the Labour Party has been most marked in proportion as it has represented the uniting ground of all sections of the working class in the political field—in accordance with the original intentions of its founders. The weaknesses have arisen where alien influences, opposed to a class outlook and alignment, and the consequent policies of disunity and splitting of the organised working class, have hindered the fulfilment of its role.

Thus it is in the recent period, after the repudiation of the original basis of unity by the rejection of the affiliation of the Communist Party and the consequent policies of extending divisions and bans, operated through a series of cumulative decisions over many years, had begun to take full effect during the past decade, that the problems of a certain setback and loss of dynamic and even tendencies to decline, have made themselves felt.

These danger-signals (interruption of the rising electoral curve of 1900-1929 in the period since 1929; halving of the individual membership in recent years; decrease in the proportion of trade unionists affiliated to the Labour Party) should give rise to careful political review and examination, in place of the ostrich-like complacency of the Labour Party Executive document, with its blandly simplified picture of forty years of "steadily extending influence and power." The adverse facts do not mean that Labour's advance must be regarded as ended or giving place to decline. But they do mean that it is necessary to give careful consideration whether recent policies have not contributed to present difficulties, and especially, whether the substitution of the original basis of unity by the modern policies of disunity has not been a factor hampering the further advance of the Labour Party.

To answer these questions it will be worth while to pursue a little further these basic issues of the development of the

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British labour movement, and of the Labour Party, which are more important for reaching a final judgment than the cheap propaganda, jibes and sneers against Communism indulged in by the rest of the Labour Party Executive's document, with the customary waving of the "Red bogy."

* * * * *

The British labour movement, in its modern form, only slowly developed into the field of independent political activity. After the crushing of Chartism, the first political movement of the working class in any country in the world, there followed the prolonged period of forty years of political slumber, under the ascendancy and triumphant progress of nineteenth-century British capitalism, during which the labour movement developed in the more restricted forms of the old craft Trade Unions and the Co-operatives, tenaciously pursuing their struggles in their limited fields, but within the framework of acceptance of Liberal capitalist political leadership.

The aims of sending workers' representatives to Parliament did not vanish during this period. A long cycle of development, through the London Working Men's Union of 1866-68, the Labour Representation League of 1869-1880 and the Labour Electoral Association of 1886-1895, preceded the foundation of the Labour Party, in its first form as the Labour Representation Committee, in 1900. The Trades Union Congress of 1869 resolved "to support the Labour Representation League to obtain the return of actual working men to the Commons' House of Parliament." By 1885 eleven Labour men were returned to Parliament, and formed a parliamentary Labour group. But these earlier forms did not represent an independent political party of the working class. These Labour representatives were returned as a wing of the Liberal Party; they were the "Lib-Labs." The earlier forms overlapped with the development of the Labour Party. It was not until 1910 that the last of the Lib-Labs, the miners' representatives, finally merged with the Labour Party.

This was the "Lib-Lab" stage of the British labour movement; and its ascendancy lasted for four decades. During this period it was roundly asserted by political authorities, including the "Lib-Lab" leaders, that Socialism was a foreign importation which could never find roots in Britain, and that, whatever might happen on the Continent, there could never arise an independent political party of the working class in Britain. The foundation of the Labour Party proved the emptiness of these confident assertions, once Britain had entered the period of imperialism and capitalist decline.

Socialist agitation and propaganda developed anew in Britain in the eighties, with the first onset of deeper industrial crisis and weakening of the former capitalist world monopoly. This Socialist agitation gave rise to the beginnings of mass organisation of the unskilled beyond the confines of the old craft unions, and the demand for an independent political party of the working class. The old Lib-Lab leaders bitterly and venomously attacked the Socialists—who, it must be recognised, attacked the old leaders no less violently—in much the same terms as right-wing Labour Party leaders have attacked the Communists in our day. They denounced the project of an independent political party of the working class as disruption and treason to the grand old cause of progressive unity through the Liberal Party.

Nevertheless, after two decades of embittered struggle, including considerable constitutional manipulation by the old leaders to weight the vote against the Socialists (exclusion of the Trades Councils from the Trades Union Congress, invention of the block vote, and restriction of delegates to officials or those working at their trades, thus excluding the principal Socialist agitators) the Socialists finally won the day at the 1899 Trades

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Union Congress, and by a narrow majority —546,000 to 434,000—carried their resolution for the establishment of the Labour Party, that is, for the organisation of Labour representation independent of the Liberals and Conservatives. It was a limited first step, but a beginning of a profound historical change. The wheel of history could not be turned back.

* * * * *

The resolution of the Plymouth Trades Union Congress in 1899 is important to quote textually, in order to establish with absolute certainty, and beyond dispute, the original conception of the founders of the Labour Party, and governing the foundation of the Labour Party, as a union of *all* working-class organisations, without exception, willing to participate, for common political action. The resolution ran:—

That this Congress, having regard to the decisions of former years, and with a view to securing a better representation of the interests of Labour in the House of Commons, hereby instructs the Parliamentary Committee *to invite the co-operation of all Co-operative, Socialistic, Trade Union and other working-class organisations* to jointly co-operate on lines mutually agreed upon in convening a special Congress of representatives from such of the above-named organisations as may be willing to take part to devise ways and means for the securing of an increased number of Labour members in the next Parliament.

In accordance with this resolution a drafting committee was set up, consisting of six representatives of the three existing Socialist organisations (Fabian Society, Independent Labour Party and Social Democratic Federation) and four representatives of the Trades Union Congress. In 1900 the Foundation Conference of the Labour Party was held, with delegates representing half a million workers, and elected a Labour Representation Committee of seven Trade Union representatives and five Socialist representatives. In 1906, following the successes at the General Election, with the return of 29 Labour Members, the Labour Representation Committee officially adopted the title of the Labour Party.

The operative resolution of the Foundation Conference of the Labour Party with regard to policy ran:—

That this Conference is in favour of working-class opinion being represented in the House of Commons by men sympathetic with the aims and demands of the Labour Movement, and whose candidatures are promoted by one or other of the organised movements.

That this Conference is in favour of establishing a distinct Labour Group in Parliament, who shall have their own Whips, and agree upon their policy, which must embrace a readiness to co-operate with any party which for the time being may be engaged in promoting legislation in the direct interest of Labour, and be equally ready to associate themselves with any party in opposing measures having the opposite tendency; and further, members of the Labour Group shall not oppose any candidates whose candidature is being promoted in terms of Resolution 1.

It will be seen that the Labour Party was originally founded as an alliance of Socialist and Trade Union organisations for the purpose of expressing "working-class opinion" in Parliament. It was open to "all Co-operative, Socialistic, Trade Union and other working-class organisations." The foundation principle was thus *working-class solidarity* in the electoral and parliamentary field and not any special fixed programme or policy. Policy was to be evolved step by step as events dictated and the opinion of the movement developed. There was no question of imposing any special programme or philosophy to exclude any Socialist or working-class organisation. For example, the Social Democratic Federation, which was at that time regarded as an extremist doctrinaire Marxist organisation, participated equally in the foundation of the Labour Party and in the original representation on the Labour Representation Committee, and only later voluntarily withdrew on sectarian grounds (subsequently after its reorganisation, following a merger, as the British Socialist Party, it corrected this sectarian error and reaffiliated to the Labour Party just before the war of 1914 and remained affiliated in 1919-20, when it was at the same time affiliated to the Communist International, without any question of a contradiction to the basis of the Labour Party being raised).

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This was the original *all-inclusive* basis of the Labour Party, as a union of all working-class organisations in the electoral and parliamentary field, which was maintained from 1900 until 1920, and was first broken by the refusal of the affiliation of the Communist Party in 1920.

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Marxism had originally elaborated the formula of the Labour Party, that is, the alliance of the Socialists and the Trade Unions for immediate common political objectives, however limited at the outset, as the necessary path forward for the development of the political working-class movement in British conditions. Marx and Engels, who had actively participated in the Chartist movement, after the collapse of Chartism immediately recognised the new stage and forms of the labour movement in Britain. They repeatedly insisted on the decisive role of the Trade Unions and their advance as the key to the advance of the working-class movement in Britain, opposing all the sectarian tendencies which were later rife among the early Socialists in Britain. Marx set the example of practical collaboration in leading work with the principal representatives of the old craft Trade Unions in the General Council of the First International during the eighteen-sixties, and he recorded his conclusion that

> All our practice has shown that it is possible to work along with the general movement of the working class without giving up or hiding our own distinct position and even organisation.

Here can be traced already the germ of the principle underlying the proposal of affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party.

Engels wrote in 1881, in an article on the Trade Unions:—

> That measure (1867 extension of the suffrage) opened out a new prospect to the working class. It gave them the majority, in London and in all manufacturing towns, and thus enabled them to enter into the struggle against capital with new weapons, by sending men of their own class to Parliament. And here, we are sorry to say, the Trades Unions forgot their duty as the advanced guard of the working class. The new weapon has been in their hands for more than ten years, but they scarcely ever unsheathed it. They ought not to forget that they cannot continue to hold the position they now occupy unless they really march in the vanguard of the working class. . . .
>
> At the side of, or above, the Unions of special trades there must spring up a general Union, a political organisation of the working-class as a whole.

Here can be traced the first formulation of the conception underlying the foundation of the Labour Party, through the advance of the Trade Unions into the electoral and parliamentary field, in "a political organisation of the working class as a whole." In the later eighties, after the appearance of the first very narrow and sectarian Socialist organisations, Engels further elaborated the formula of an alliance of the Socialist organisations and the Trade Unions as the path of development of a broad political working-class movement in Britain.

Unfortunately, owing to the limitations and weaknesses of the early Socialist organisations in Britain, there were no representatives of Marxism capable of carrying out these Marxist principles and fulfilling the task of organisation of a Labour Party in association with the many tendencies already developing towards independent Labour representation. Thus, the leadership fell into the hands of the anti-Marxist reformist representatives (Fabians and Independent Labour Party) who were still liberal in outlook and opposed to the class struggle. In organising the Labour Party they were, in fact, organising a class movement of the workers in the political field; but at the same time in their philosophy they sought to deny the class struggle and the class basis of the movement they were leading. Hence arose a contradiction which has dogged the development of the Labour Party up to the present, and has given rise to many internal difficulties and problems which to-day clamour for solution.

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What is this contradiction?

In practice the Labour Party as an organisation is based on the class organisa-

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tions of the workers. The overwhelming bulk of the membership join through their Trade Unions. They join, that is to say, on the basis of working-class solidarity and unity—which includes, since 1918 the recognition of the common aim of working-class emancipation or Socialism—and not on the basis of some special sectional viewpoint or doctrine within the working-class movement. Herein the Labour Party differs from the type of Continental Social Democratic Party. This was the case in the foundation of the Labour Party, and remains so to-day in respect of organisation. Of 375,000 members in 1900, 353,000 belonged through their Trade Unions. Of 2,485,000 members in 1941, 2,230,000, or nine-tenths, belong through their Trade Unions—that is, through the organs of working-class solidarity.

This class basis was explicitly recognised in the earlier documents of the Labour Party, which spoke of the Labour Party as designed to represent "the general interests of wage-earners." Thus the Annual Report for 1902 declared:—

> There is some danger in action which makes the Labour member representative of one Trade Union rather than of *the general interests of wage-earners*. It is the wage-earner, and not only the miner, the engineer or the railway servant who needs representation. . . . Only in this way can our movement be one for *Labour* representation, and not merely for *trade* representation.

But at the same time an influential section of the leadership, preaching a Liberal-reformist philosophy of hostility to the class struggle, in their entire propaganda and policy opposed this class basis (accepting it in practice only as a sordid financial necessity) and sought to impose instead their special doctrinal Liberal-reformist basis, alien to the class struggle, as the condition of membership, thus cutting across the principle of working-class solidarity.

It is obvious that this policy is disruptive in its effects, destroying, insofar as it is successful, the basis of working-class solidarity, and leading to expulsions and splits. This was the policy especially associated with the group of leadership represented by MacDonald, Snowden and Thomas and which led to the refusal of affiliation of the Communist Party and subsequent widening expulsions.

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This contradiction had already made itself felt in the early years before 1914, although it came to a head in the later period. It raised a sharp problem before the international Socialist movement in 1908, when the Labour Party applied for affiliation to the old Second International. The Second International finally accepted the affiliation in a resolution which declared, in a formula of Kautsky, that:—

> In view of the standing resolutions of the International Congresses which admit all organisations that recognise the proletarian class struggle and the necessity of political action:
>
> The International Bureau declares that the English Labour Party is to be admitted to the International Socialist Congresses because, although it does not avowedly recognise the class struggle, it actually carries it on; and because the organisation of the Labour Party, being independent of the bourgeois parties, is based upon the class struggle.

The Labour Party Annual Report for 1909 recorded this decision as "very gratifying." Lenin criticised Kautsky's formula and proposed an amendment which gave a clear Marxist estimate. He proposed that the Labour Party should be accepted for affiliation on the grounds that :—

> It represents the first step of the really proletarian organisations of England to a conscious class policy and to a Socialist Labour Party.

This is an important guide to the Marxist approach to the question of the Labour Party.

* * * * *

But the contradiction came to the forefront in the years since 1918, and it has centred especially on the question of the affiliation of the Communist Party.

In 1918 the Labour Party, in response to the wide changes opened by the first world war and the general working class and popular awakening in all countries following the victory of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution, went through an im-

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portant transformation. For the first time a programme was adopted, recognising the aim of Socialism:—

> To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.

This programme and aim remains the programme and aim of the Labour Party to-day, and is fully supported by Communists and all Socialists, as by all politically conscious workers. There is no basis of conflict here. Membership of the Labour Party was thrown open to individual members. Steps were taken for the advance of the Labour Party as a leading political party.

This transformation reflected in its main character a very great advance of the political working-class movement in Britain. On this basis membership shot up from one and a half millions in 1914 to four and a quarter millions in 1920. The electoral vote rose from half a million in 1910 to two and a quarter millions in 1918, four and a quarter millions in 1922, five and a half millions in 1924, and the peak of 8,364,000 in 1929.

But at the same time this transformation was two-sided. The Liberal reformist policy sought at the same time to strengthen its grip on the Labour Party and to carry through the change to the role of a "national" party in the sense of weakening its class basis. The advocates of this policy sought to turn the Labour Party into a Social-Democratic Party of the post-1918 Continental type, like the Weimar German Social Democratic Party, whose misguided policies and resistance to working-class unity prepared the way for the victory of Hitler. They hoped to establish, through the throwing open of the doors of individual membership to those who were neither Trade Unionists, nor prepared to join a Socialist organisation, a lever against the influence of the Trade Unions and against the class basis of the Labour Party. They showed their hand when, after the adoption of the aim of Socialism in 1918, they succeeded in 1920 in securing the rejection of the application for affiliation of the newly-formed Communist Party (composed of the previously affiliated British Socialist Party and other groups). This rejection was the first direct blow to the basis of unity represented by the Labour Party. This blow was succeeded by others, as the initial rejection was followed by an extending series of bans and expulsions which injured the development of the Labour Party.

The policies of this leading group, represented by MacDonald, Snowden and Thomas, which dominated the Labour Party in this period, and which in the political field led to the collapse of 1931, in the organisational field found expression in the exclusion of the Communist Party and the extending system of bans and expulsions. These were two halves of a single system of policy. It was the same leading group which put through both.

It is instructive to-day to note the subsequent record of the principal protagonists of the opposition to Communist affiliation and of the system of bans and exclusions, in the great debates on these issues through successive Labour Party Conferences in the nineteen-twenties. In the 1922 Conference, when the principal debate on Communist affiliation took place and when the case for affiliation was argued by Harry Pollitt, then present with full rights as a delegate, the case against was presented by three main representatives: Ramsay MacDonald, W. J. Brown and Frank Hodges. MacDonald subsequently dealt the heaviest blow in its history against the Labour Party by his betrayal of 1931, and passed over to join the open enemies of the Labour Party. W. J. Brown, who lectured Pollitt on loyalty to the Labour Party, passed on to his present disruptive role. Frank Hodges, who lectured Communists on their "slave" mentality, passed out of the Labour Party to become a Director of big business

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concerns, including the Bank of England's Securities Management Trust. The Communists remain fighting in the ranks of the working-class struggle. The list could be extended with the protagonists of disruption at subsequent Conferences, like Spencer, who passed on to organise the "Non-Political Miners' Union" in Notts against the Miners' Federation, and many others. This lesson of the subsequent record of the opponents of Communist affiliation should give food for thought to sincere members of the Labour Party to-day.

* * * * *

The policies of the leading group associated with MacDonald, which dominated the Labour Party in the nineteen-twenties, ended in shipwreck in 1931. But the practical lesson has not yet been learned. The policies of disunity and denial of working-class solidarity, which found expression in the refusal of Communist affiliation and the system of expulsions, are still maintained.

In consequence the nineteen-thirties have seen, in place of the new advance which should have taken place, following the capitalist crisis and the advance of the Fascist menace, dangerous signs of an arrest of the advance of the Labour Party and even of weakening.

It would not be fair to say, in view of the many other factors involved, that since 1920, when the application of the Communist Party for affiliation was first refused, the Labour Party, which up to that year had continuously advanced in membership, has never again touched the peak of membership reached in that year, although Trade Union membership has now reached a new record, exceeding 1920. But responsible opinion cannot fail to take note of the fact that the electoral level of 1929 has not been equalled in the two subsequent elections of 1931 and 1935, or of the significance of the very considerable fall in individual membership in recent years, or the decline in the level of activity, alongside the marked advance of trade unionism in these same years, or of the general level of political awakening and consciousness.

Further danger-signals have revealed themselves in the recent period in the growth of splitting movements like the Common Wealth Party. The absence of a powerful united labour movement leads to disintegration in the political situation, as the experience of Germany in the years preceding Hitler showed. It leads to the drifting away of sections of backward or disillusioned workers to follow any demagogic leadership which presents itself with plausible slogans, and to the loss of the potential support of awakening middle-class elements who, through lack of confidence in the labour movement, are drawn into channels separate from the labour movement and are thus at the mercy of any cheapjack programme and leadership which seeks to exploit their political immaturity. On the other hand, a united labour movement would not only rally the full strength of the working class far beyond the range of the present organised strength, but would also constitute a magnetic centre capable of drawing together all the progressive forces in a common immediate campaign.

The present situation offers the opportunity, and the urgent need, to end these weaknesses and build anew a stronger basis for a powerful united labour movement capable of fulfilling present tasks. The time has come to heal the breach, to end the policies of disunity, and to find the basis of co-operation of all sections in the common cause. The experience and lessons of these past years, no less than the plain needs of the present, have created a deepened readiness and eagerness among all sections to achieve such co-operation.

This does not mean departing from the true basis and tradition of the Labour Party, or sacrificing all that has been achieved by the efforts of millions of workers through the Labour Party. On the contrary, it means re-establishing the true basis and tradition of the Labour

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Party by ending those policies which have done it harm and by re-establishing the Labour Party as the union and alliance of all working-class organisations for the common aims of the working-class movement and the achievement of Socialism. The acceptance of Communist affiliation would powerfully assist in this.

Beveridge and Health

by D. STARK MURRAY

(Editor, Medicine Today and Tomorrow)

THE provision of a health service is an essential feature of any scheme of Social Security. The precise type of service, as with all parts of the Social Security Service, will depend to a large extent on the general arrangements existing in the State at any given moment. In the socialist State health would be regarded as a national asset and the medical services would be arranged from that point of view. In the capitalist State the arrangements are of a partial nature designed, as W. Gallacher put it in his article in the January issue of LABOUR MONTHLY, "as a form, and a very necessary form, of insurance for the profits of the employers. There are no profits obtained from the residents of a sanatorium or the occupants of a cemetery."

Medicine in this country has up to the present shown the same features as many of our other institutions, remaining individualistic in many respects, but involving certain measures of State control and many forms of communal, though usually voluntary, organisation. This development is a reflection of the general economic development of the country and is very clearly summarised by Professor H. E. Sigerist in his book *Socialised Medicine in the U.S.S.R.* He says:—

> Charity proved an unreliable system for protecting the people's health. . . . Besides, the development of the large industrial proletariat increased the number of indigent sick to such an extent that it became impossible to provide medical care on that basis. . . . Another factor entered the scene. The protection of society against epidemics and the sanitation of the environment were tasks which could be solved only by the State. . . . As a result of such developments, the systems of protecting the people's health are in all capitalist countries compromise-systems. Medical service is given to the population by various agencies in various ways, State medicine, insurance medicine, charity medicine and private medicine.

It is clear that we are ready in this country for some large scale change in the organisation of the medical services; and the question which is presented by the health sections of the Beveridge Report is whether we can continue with a compromise system or must prepare for a completely new form of medical service. Sir William Beveridge has not clearly moved for either the one or the other. He insists that if his scheme of Social Security is to work there must be in existence "a comprehensive National Health Service," but he leaves the working out of the exact structure to others.

It is true he lays down certain principles which can only be translated into practice by a form of medicine in which individualistic methods are reduced to an absolute minimum and does demand that this service should be available to the whole community; but he states that his Ministry of Social Security is not primarily interested in the details of a medical scheme, although general considerations make it clear that the medical and other sections of Social Security are so closely interlinked that they cannot be considered separately.

To fulfil the needs of the Beveridge Report we must have a Health Service which will make the prevention of disease and the education of the public in the maintenance of health easy and as complete as possible in place of the present medical service which deals almost entirely with the treatment of disease. The health service must be complete in every respect, covering every citizen for all

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possible contingencies. If the service is to be responsive to the needs of the individual it must be democratically controlled. If it is to ensure the accurate certification which the Beveridge Scheme demands, it must be closely geared to the Social Security machinery.

It is probable that Sir William Beveridge recognises these points at least in so far as the restoration of the sick and injured is concerned, for he says that this is "a duty of the State and the sick person, *prior to any other consideration*." This definition approaches, but does not completely accept, the conception of health as an asset to the State and of the protection of health as a function of the State. It is difficult, however, to see how it can be fulfilled in any way other than by a health service which is organised by the State with the object of maintaining the optimum health of the greatest number of the people over the greatest possible period of their lives.

So far the organised medical profession has failed to propound such a scheme. The existence of the Medical Planning Commission, set up by the British Medical Association, recognises the need for preparing some kind of scheme for post-war medical development, but nothing which has so far been published by that or other official bodies approaches the type of scheme which the Beveridge Report demands. Most of those which have been published are attempts at maintaining as much of the existing system, particularly its financial basis, as possible.

The Government statement on the Beveridge Report, and developments since, indicate that the medical section has been broadly accepted, but that the scheme is still to contain a number of compromises. The Minister of Health has already outlined his scheme to representatives of the medical profession, the local authorities and the voluntary hospital. The opposition he has to meet is on the lines to be expected when any vested interest is endangered. If the Minister is to stand up to and defeat that opposition he will need to feel that he has the backing of the whole country for a really complete and national service.

The Socialist Medical Association is alone in proposing a scheme which would both answer the needs of a Social Security Service within the capitalist State as visualised by Sir William and be capable of expansion into a completely socialised system of medicine. The *Socialist Programme for Health*, as the publication is called, is based both on existing experience and institutions in this country and on the many experiments which have been carried out in other countries, particularly in the U.S.S.R. It is adapted to our population distribution and based on local authorities modified to meet modern conditions, but it is also a national scheme designed to cover the whole country equally and controlled by a Minister of Health responsible to Parliament.

The outstanding feature of this service would be that the country would be divided into areas within which the health services would be almost entirely self-contained in the sense of being able to provide everything which the prevention and cure of disease demands. Within each area the operational unit of the health service would be a population of about one hundred thousand. This unit is chosen because it is capable of a simple form of administrative control, but requires a medical staff and a hospital large enough to cater for everything the individual or the community is likely to need. The actual work of the doctors would be done from a series of four or five Health Centres, which would replace the present inefficient and unorganised surgeries of individual practitioners.

From these Health Centres every worker would be able to obtain every type of medical service which exists today and every new method as it develops. Whether the financial arrangements were those of the Beveridge Scheme or the

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more simple method of paying for the medical services out of the total revenue of the country, the service of all the doctors, nurses and technicians staffing each health unit would be constantly and readily available to every citizen. Within each unit there would be a large and efficient hospital to which the whole population could come with the knowledge that the standard of the staff was the highest which a controlled method of appointment could guarantee.

Associated with the Health Centre would be those health workers who to-day play so important a part in assisting medical men to carry out their many duties. They include health visitors, social welfare workers, home nurses and home helps. The increasing employment of the last named is one of the valuable ideas contained in the Beveridge Report and one which is feasible only if the medical services are organised through health centres, the staff of which will have the responsibility of providing everything that is necessary for the sick and their dependants. It is also through a system of health centres that the examination of the sick and injured from the point of view of the social security officers can best be carried out by groups of doctors who, while they are organised and paid by the State, have a recognised and independent position so that they can give their opinion without rousing the fear which exists to-day when workers are sent for certification to medical officers paid by their employers.

It is not proposed in this scheme that the ordinary medical service should be provided at or through factories, for it is assumed that it is best to provide medical care for the family rather than the individual. The system does include, however, a complete industrial medical service which would comprise both doctors for factory inspection and doctors for the primary treatment of those suffering through industrial disease or accident. These officers would, like all the health service personnel, be full-time salaried members of the staff of the nearest Health Centre and would be able, therefore, to work in close contact with the family doctor and to discuss with him the patient's home environment as well as his factory conditions and at the same time would be able to follow up treatment of injury or disease in the local hospital and to ensure that rehabilitation was as rapid and complete as possible.

This question of rehabilitation has many important aspects both for the social security service and for the individual. On the one hand, it is important that the individual should be returned to industry at the earliest possible moment; on the other, it is important, both for the sake of the sick or injured man and in order that the health service should not be burdened with patients whose condition has been aggravated by too rapid convalescence, that the return to work should be under medical control from the moment at which the injury occurred or the disease began. This involves a consideration of the individual standard of health, of the home environment, of the factory conditions and of the amount of physical effort involved in each type of employment and can only be carried out by a team of doctors with full knowledge of each of these different fields. The Health Centre is the ideal place for controlling restoration of health.

Mention of the home environment brings us to another question with which the medical profession has been entirely unable to deal in the past, namely, the standard of living of the working class. Despite the repeatedly demonstrated effects of faulty nutrition and bad housing upon health, the medical profession has, because of its complete lack of organisation, failed to compel any drastic alteration. A group of doctors in charge of a Health Centre controlling the welfare of a particular unit of population would be in a position to force changes in any environmental factor which they, in conjunction with other social welfare personnel, felt was adversely affecting the health of the

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community. This would be made more easy once a system of periodic health examinations had been instituted and once a picture had been built up of the existing state of health in any particular area. The nutritional standard of the people could be closely watched and through the social security service, or in some other way, the necessary adjustments to enable an optimal standard of nutrition could be made.

In the Health Centre programme we have a method by which the health sections of the Beveridge Report could be carried out almost immediately and in the fullest possible fashion. It is quite clear that the Beveridge Report does not visualise a socialised medical service in a socialist State, but it does offer a method of getting rid of the present fee-for-service basis of medical practice and substituting a medical service which would answer the socialist case of being free from economic barriers between the individual and medical care. We cannot allow any attempt to put into operation less than Sir William asks, viz.:—

> A national health service which will ensure that for every citizen there is available whatever medical treatment he requires, in whatever form he requires it, domiciliary or institutional, general, specialist or consultant, and will ensure also the provision of dental, ophthalmic and surgical appliances, nursing and midwifery and rehabilitation after accidents.

It cannot be denied that this provision would mark a great step forward in the social welfare of the nation; nor can it be doubted that it would in a short time produce changes in the health standard of the whole population which would enable them to take advantage of or to put into practice further and even more far-reaching changes in the existing system.

Book Reviews

The Patriotic War

Napoleon's Invasion of Russia—1812 by Eugene Tarle (Allen & Unwin, 12s6d).

IT IS no accident that Russia to-day calls her war against Hitler by the same name that Russia in 1812 called her war against Napoleon—*otiechestvennaya voina*, the Patriotic War, or War for the Fatherland. Nor is there any question of straining a historical parallel; the immense difference between the military, social and political condition of the two wars is obvious. The fact remains that 1812 and 1943 are linked by their common expression of the deep meaning of a war waged by an entire people for the preservation of their national independence.

This it is, undoubtedly, that gives Professor Tarle's study its compelling sense of actuality. The *doyen* of Soviet historians employs his great scholarship to show how "not the cold and not Russia's vast expanses conquered Napoleon, but the resistance of the Russian people." And it must be said that he brilliantly combines erudition with a capacity to enthral that most novelists might envy. Here is the most up-to-date and richly documented exposition of the war of 1812 in the English language; and it is as exciting as a burning current dispatch from Ilya Ehrenburg.

The sombre epic of the annihilation of the Grande Armee on its retreat from Moscow—the most ghastly and overwhelming *debacle* in military history until the smashing of the Sixth Army at Stalingrad—is, of course, universally known. Tarle illuminates it anew; he particularly exposes the reactionary character of Napoleon's campaign (e.g., his refusal to consider proclaiming the emancipation of the serfs) mercilessly explodes the myth of the supposedly "heroic" Governor Rostopchin (the burning of Moscow), and gives an impressive picture of the peasant guerilla movement and partisan warfare (the present victor of the Don, Colonel-General Eremenko, had a namesake, a simple infantryman who organised and led the Smolensk guerillas of 1812).

Of especial interest is the detailed account and analysis of the strategy of Kutuzov, the subtle and shrewd old protege of the immortal Suvorov, whom the Tsar Alexander grudgingly put in supreme command after the initial disasters of the campaign. Tarle explains Kutuzov's strategy in particular relation to the alliance of Russia and Britain. There was not, he shows, real unity of aim between the two allies. This emerged in the incessant conflict between Kutuzov and General Sir Robert Wilson, the British High Commissioner at Russian Headquarters.

The old Field-Marshal was a Russian patriot whose concern was to expel the French invader by inflicting the maximum losses on him for the minimum cost in Russian lives. Hence the refusal of pitched battles, the "parallel march," the use of Cossack raiders and partisans, etc.

Wilson constantly and unscrupulously intrigued against Kutuzov because the interest of Britain (*i.e.*, of the City of London and the rising capitalist interests in trade and industry) required the absolute destruction of the Napoleonic Empire in order to ensure British commercial supremacy. Wilson

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was thus ever "extremely generous in spending Russian blood" (or in urging Kutuzov to do so), while his principals poured in arms and money to Alexander; "the English," Tarle drily observes, "have always been generous when trying to defeat a strong enemy with the help of a foreign army."

The present translation has some irritating minor defects. Unintelligent transliteration of foreign proper names from the Russian produces results like Labomme for Labaume and Buksgevden for Buxhoeveden; while the rendering of "muskets" as "rifles" is an absurd anachronism and the appearance of Cossack lances as "pikes" is simply grotesque.

ALLEN HUTT.

Shorter Notices

Girls Growing Up by A. P. Jephcott. Faber & Faber, 6*s*.

THIS BOOK is a study of the life, at work, home, and play, of the working-class adolescent girl. As such it is a devastating exposure of capitalism's frustration and perversion of our youth. One sees the fertile soil which Hitler cultivated so well via the Hitler Jugend and the Bund Deutscher Madchen. Perhaps intentionally the author says little on the positive side, except that youth clubs, though capable of playing a far larger part in providing social life and an informal education in democracy, cannot alone solve the problem. But it is clear that only a change comparable to that in the Soviet Union can provide a correct environment for the development of the adolescent. The book lacks a chapter dealing specifically with the effects of the war. Though the author favours democratically run youth clubs, she has the social worker's conception of helping the youth, instead of the conception of the main task being for the youth to help themselves with merely assistance from their elders. Here is the great opportunity for the Y.C.L., the only youth organisation run by youth, and the urgent need, to recruit by the hundred thousand under the slogan "Conquer Your Future Now."

P.H.

Britain's Schools. C.P.G.B., 6*d*.

AFTER A brief historical survey, and a consideration of the effect of the war on the schools, three sections, covering twenty-five of the forty pages, deal with the Communist Party's proposals for educational change.

The main demands are for abolition of the dual system; the raising of the school-leaving age to sixteen; absorption of the public schools into the State system of education; the establishment of single-type schools with equal opportunity for all from the nursery department to the university; and for better conditions in the teaching profession to attract thereto the recruits who will become necessary consequent upon the raising of the school-leaving age. Finally, there are appendices packed with technical information such as administration of education, the teaching service and religion in schools.

The Communist Party, in contrast to other more academic programmes, alone makes demands which will immediately benefit the child, such as free meals and free milk for all—a demand which, as a teacher in a school in a very poor area, I heartily endorse. But it would have been good had the memorandum contained some indication of how far the Communist demands for reconstruction are in line with the teachers' own proposals.

P. M. IBBOTSON.

The Other Germany by Heinrich Fraenkel. 144 pp. Lindsay Drummond. Price 6*s*.
Goebbels and the Second Front by Heinz Schmidt. Preface by Gordon Schaffer. 16 pp. I.N.G. Publication. Price 3*d*.

MR. FRAENKEL gives a detailed survey of the activities of the underground movement in Germany, especially since the attack on the Soviet Union. In explaining the various activities of the German opposition he does not miss the opportunity to point out that they are still absolutely insufficient as measured by what is needed, and prefaces his description by a chapter dealing with the atrocities committed by the barbarian soldiery of Fascist Germany.

There is one way to give most substantial help to the work of the German opposition: the Second Front. By an attack in the West, by severe defeats of the German army, by teaching many of the duped German soldiers with the bayonet and the tank, the position of the Fascist government will be seriously undermined. In a brilliant little pamphlet Mr. Schmidt shows us the intense fear of the Second Front in which the Fascist leaders of Germany live.

J.K.

Publications Received

Wartime Transference of Labour in Great Britain (International Labour Office, 4*s*, 163 pp.).
India by H. Palmer (Marx House Syllabus) (Lawrence & Wishart, 6*d*, 39 pp.).
Women in Industry by Joan Thompson (Marx House Syllabus) (Lawrence & Wishart, 6*d*, 39 pp.).
Inside the Left by Fenner Brockway (Geo. Allen & Unwin Ltd., 352 pp., 15*s*).
The Indian Problem, 1833-1935, Pt. I by R. Coupland (Oxford University Press, 160 pp., 6*s*).
More Pay for the Fighting Forces (Labour Research Dept., 16 pp., 2*d*).
Russia—Britain's Ally, 1812-1942 by F. D. Klingender (Harrap, 62 pp., 7*s* 6*d*).
Lenin and Stalin on Propaganda (Little Lenin Library), (Lawrence & Wishart, 32 pp., 6*d*).
A Christian Approach to Communism by Tiran Nersoyan (Frederick Muller, 3*s* 6*d*, 117 pp.).
A Short History of France by Sir J. A. R. Marriott (Methuen & Co., 15*s*, 291 pp.).

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